



September 11, 2008

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Risk  
Management  
Agency

Raleigh  
Regional Office

4405 Bland Road,  
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Raleigh, NC 27609

## INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

**TO:** ALL NORTHEAST REINSURED COMPANIES

**FROM:** LARRY N. ATKINSON /s/ *Larry N. Atkinson*  
DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT:** 2009 VINIFERA GRAPE WRITTEN AGREEMENT GUIDELINES

### BACKGROUND:

Section 4G(3), page 84 of the 2007 Crop Insurance Handbook (CIH) allows the RMA Regional Office to issue additional guidelines to determine adaptability of the crop for written agreement requests. Vinifera grapes are insurable only by written agreement as shown on the Special Provisions of Insurance (SPOI) documents and FCI-35 County Actuarial Tables as Types: 210, 211, 212, 213, and 214 (Groups D1,D2,D3,D4, and D5) in the established grape counties of New York and Pennsylvania. Requests may also be made for Vinifera grapes in other states within the Raleigh Region.

### DETERMINATION:

Vinifera grape vines, especially newly planted grape vines, are susceptible to winter freeze damage. Some Vinifera grape varieties are more susceptible to freeze damage than other varieties, but all Vinifera grape varieties are susceptible to freeze damage during the first several years after planting. Additional guidelines are needed to determine insurability and rates that will be assigned to the written agreement requests.

### IMPLEMENTATION:

The following items are required before requests for Vinifera grape written agreements may be considered:

1) For Vinifera grape varieties, at least 5 crop years of certified APH yields, with an average yield of 2 tons/acre (after reaching the production minimum of 2 tons/acre) is required by the RMA Raleigh Regional Office (RO) before the request can be considered (e.g., chardonnay grapes planted in the spring of 2000, meeting at least a minimum of 2.0 tons/acre in 2004). Note: See APH example on page 2.

Note: Average APH yields less than 2.0 tons/acre may be considered, provided at least four years within the past five years of APH yield history have produced at least seventy-five percent or greater of the APH yield average and the vineyard inspection is favorable.



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10 YEAR		14 PROD.	15 ACRES	16 YIELD
2000		0	2.1	
2001		0	2.1	
2002		0	2.1	
2003		3.6	2.1	1.7 *
2004		4.8	2.1	2.3
2005		6.7	2.1	3.2
2006		7.6	2.1	3.6
2007		0	2.1	0
2008		5.0	2.1	2.4
TOTAL				11.5
		17 T-YIELD ADJ.		
		18 AVERAGE YIELD		$11.5 \div 5 = 2.3$

\* The 2003 crop year is not used in the average since the minimum yield of 2.0 tons/acre has not been attained.

2) A complete Pre-Acceptance Perennial Crop Inspection Report and supporting documentation as outlined in the CIH Section 7F(6). The inspection must show the location of each block of grapes (sketch map and FSA aerial photos), distance from the nearest lake or large body of water, aspect of slope (north, south, east, or west side), elevation, variety, year planted for each variety, acres, and rootstock. Note: The location or “microclimate” is an important risk factor for Vinifera grapes.

3) The Actuarial Change Request for Vinifera grapes will be considered by the Raleigh RO if the request is signed by the sales closing date deadline (November 20, 2008). In addition, all required information must be sent to the Raleigh RO, no later than 15 business days after the November 20th deadline date, or December 12, 2008 (Section 3F(2) of the 2007 Written Agreement Handbook). Requests for Actuarial Change and supportive “required” information sent after the December 12<sup>th</sup> deadline date will be rejected by the Raleigh RO.

4) Vinifera Written Agreement requests require the following: 1) Request for Actuarial Change Form, 2) Actual Production History (APH) form, 3) Legal Description or Farm Serial Number (FSN) including tract number, 4) Perennial Crop Inspection Report, 5) Producer’s Pre-Acceptance Worksheet, and 6) FSA aerial photograph, GIS, or GPS maps. In addition to the above requirements, “renewal” written agreements must include a copy of the previous year’s written agreement.

5) The Raleigh RO may consider added acres (blocks) that have reached the production minimum of 2 tons/acre, but have not attained 5 years of records, if there is a block of the same variety already approved under these, or previous crop year Vinifera Grape Written Agreements. Additional documentation for acceptance of an APH with less than five years of records must include the location for the requested block of Vinifera grapes and the location of a Vinifera block of the same variety.

Requests for new Written Agreements may be considered in counties without actuarial documents. In addition to the previously required information, verifiable production records for at least the three most recent crop years in the base period must be submitted to the Raleigh RO by the applicable deadline.